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Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 00063
CX:

ACTION: AMB
INFO: POL PMA DCM

DISSEMINATION: AMB /1
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: PMA:AGODFREY
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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8461
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU//TCH// IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000063

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE AND EUR/RPM DAVY,
OSD FOR ISA-NATO SINKS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/14/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [MARR](#)
SUBJECT: TURKISH PARTICIPATION IN NATO ALLIANCE GROUND
SURVEILLANCE (AGS) PROGRAM

REF: SECSTATE 3482

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor A.F. Godfrey

Will Not Break Silence...

11. (C) In response to reftel demarche, MFA NATO Infrastructure and Logistics Department Head Deniz Cakar told us that although Turkey has decided not to break silence on the basing decision for the NATO AGS program, it was not happy with the process leading up to the NAC decision sheet. She made clear that if another nation breaks silence first, Turkey will join the break and submit its views. She stressed that the key reason Turkey decided not to break silence is because of its close ties with the US and a desire to show solidarity in a program that is clearly important for the US. She complained that Turkey felt it was not adequately consulted as NATO was deliberating the relative merits of each of the Main Operating Base (MOB) candidates and alleged that the US appeared more interested in consulting and coordinating with Germany and Italy rather than Turkey on this issue. She said Turkey had expressed its concerns and views on a number of occasions with the relevant NATO Assistant Secretary General, but felt that Ankara's views were not given serious consideration.

... But May Still Withdraw from AGS

12. (C) Cakar said Turkey could still very well withdraw from the program. Selection of Corlu as the program's MOB was "the main reason" for Turkish participation, and with that rationale gone, the only reason it is not breaking silence is out of solidarity with the US. She said it was unclear

whether there will be added value for Turkey by participating in this program and that the MFA and TGS will have to further assess the details of the program to determine whether it is worthwhile for Turkey to participate.

¶3. (C) We noted that Turkish participation in the program will bring valuable benefits to Turkish industry as well as consideration by SHAPE for a possible future support role for Corlu. While expressing appreciation for Turkey's desire to show solidarity with the US, we stressed that giving NATO AGS is important for NATO's key missions, including in Afghanistan. Cakar downplayed the potential benefits to Turkey by participating in the program, and stressed again that the political decision was to maintain silence in support of the US.

¶4. (C) Mentioning some of the alternatives Turkey is considering, Cakar said Turkey may decide not to contribute to the initial acquisition costs, or Turkey may opt out of paying for maintenance, although it will likely contribute toward operating costs on a cost-share basis. She noted Turkey is seeking its own ISR assets and, depending on when those come on-line, Turkey might opt to provide "in-kind" contributions to the program, similar to the UK approach, instead of paying into NATO cost shares.

¶5. (C) She noted that one consideration that might be helpful from the Turkish military's perspective (although this is not a decisive factor) is to offer a billet at the AGS MOB to a Turkish officer that is higher than Turkey's cost share would normally warrant. She did not specify at what level Turkey believes it should have a billet, but would only say that the Turkish military is not interested in a "minor role."

¶6. (C) Comment: While Turkey has agreed to maintain silence on the NAC decision on basing for the AGS program, it is far from certain that Turkey will remain in the program. Turkey clearly felt stung by what it perceives as a NATO (and US) bias in favor of Italy and Germany early on in the process of determining the MOB location. If Turkey chooses to remain in the program, it will likely try to place conditions on the PMOU it signs. While Turkey realizes it is not normal procedure to provide a relatively senior billet to a nation that is not contributing a significant share of the costs of a NATO program, this may be necessary to help ensure Turkey remains on board. End Comment.

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Jeffrey